Impact of private sector investment

†3054. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to direct investment by private investors they have procured wheat at a large scale so the same could not be purchased adequately on support price this year;

(b) whether due to this private investment system market price of wheat has gone up by 20 per cent and benefit of this price-rise is directly going to the private investors; and

(c) whether Government propose to take any step to check it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) The low procurement of wheat by Government agencies in Rabi Marketing Season 2006-07 is because of negative market sentiments due to low stocks of wheat in the Central Pool, high open market prices, lower than targeted production, lesser market arrivals and more participation by private traders. Private companies reported to have procured about 15 lakh tonnes of wheat during the Rabi Marketing Season, 2006-07. This is just 2.16% of the production of wheat in crop year 2005-06.

(b) Reasons for rise in prices are short fall in domestic supply relative to demand and hardening of international prices. Farmers have been benefited by rise in market prices of wheat and also announcement of bonus of Rs. 50.00 per quintal by the Government in addition to Minimum Support Price.

(c) To contain the prices of wheat, Government has already decided to import 39 lakh tonnes of wheat for the Central Pool. Import of wheat at a reduced duty of 5% has also been allowed under Open General Licence.

Average income of farmers

†3055. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are not having any record of average income of farmers;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.